

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for the treatment of a trauma patient with multiple rib fractures, comprising,
 - determining a rib fracture score derived from the number of rib fractures sustained by the patient, the number of sides on which the patient has sustained rib fractures, and the age of the patient;
 - selecting treatment methodologies for the patient based on the rib fracture score; and
 - treating the patient using the selected treatment methodologies.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the rib fracture score is determined by multiplying the number of rib fractures by the number of sides on which the patient has sustained rib fractures and adding an age factor derived from the age of the patient.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the age factor is 0 if the patient is less than 50 years old, 1 if the patient is 51 to 60 years old, 2 if the patient is 61 to 70 years old, 3 if the patient is 71 to 80 years old, and 4 if the patient is greater than 80 years old.
4. The method of claim 3 wherein the treatment methodologies are selected from categories of increasingly aggressive treatment depending on the rib fracture score.
5. The method of claim 4 wherein the treatment methodologies are conservative if the rib fracture score is 3 to 6, progressive if the rib fracture score

is 7 to 10, aggressive if the rib fracture score is 11 to 15, and emergent if the score is greater than 15.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the treatment methodologies are directed to pain management, respiratory management and activity/motility of the patient.